

aren't okay with people buying and flirting their way into the United States. They demand safe and secure borders and honest and upstanding Border Patrol agents.

Make no doubt about it, most of our Border Patrol agents are honest hard-working men and women. But we must make an example of anyone who breaks the immigration laws, no matter which side of the border they live on. From time to time, we point out even on this House floor corruption of some Mexican Government officials that work along the southern border when they are helping drug smugglers and coyotes all in the name of filthy lucre, so we cannot tolerate a few border agents who, in the name of money, sell out America and insult the good name of most of our border agents.

So all of those who make money off of illegal entrants should be accountable, and it makes no difference, Mr. Speaker, who they are. The rule of law should be enforced. It is illegal to enter the United States without permission. That is the rule, and it should be enforced by honest border agents. And people that enter illegally should be held accountable.

It makes no difference who those people are, whether they are illegals that cross, whether they are narcoterrorists that bring money or drugs into the United States to sell, whether they are coyotes, or whether they are illicit businesses in the United States that exploit illegals that are working here, or whether they are corrupt border agents. All of these must be held accountable for the actions they commit, because the border is a national security issue.

And that's just the way it is.

STAGNATING MIDDLE-CLASS INCOMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, while the Republican Members of Congress have been blocking the first minimum-wage increase in 9 years, there is new evidence that income stagnation is not just hurting lower middle-class families but middle-class families across the board.

Just the other day, the Los Angeles Times reported that income stagnation is now hitting people with a 4-year college education. In fact, the White House's own economists report that earnings and income for employees with 4-year college degrees fell by 5.2 percent between 2000 and 2004, during the President's first term. That is when adjusted for inflation. So, basically, if you have a college degree education, you had a decline in income.

Now, for 30 years, 40 years we have told people that you earn what you learn. A college degree today is no longer as valuable a ticket to success as it was before. You have to literally

go back 30 years, to the 1970s stagflation, when people with a college education saw their income decline.

Now, what is happening in addition to income decline in America? This isn't just for working stiffs. This is for people with a 4-year college education and also for people with a master's education.

Energy prices? Well, they are up, more than doubled. In fact, when the President took office, gas was \$1.33 a gallon. Today, it has gone up to close to \$3 a gallon.

Health care costs. Health care costs for a family of four has risen 78 percent, to \$11,000 a year for a family of four.

College costs for their kids, up 38 percent for a 4-year college education.

Savings, for the first time since World War II, are in negative territory, which is why people say bankruptcy and debt is one of their biggest economic concerns besides filling up their car with gas.

So take that whole picture: incomes declining, energy prices up, close to doubling; health care costs \$11,000 a year for a family of four, and continuing at 25 percent increases; college costs up 38 percent; savings in negative territory. We have a Swiss cheese economy, and it is hurting and killing the middle class, who have done everything right. They got told to get a college education and you earn what you learn. Today that college education ain't enough. They went out and earned a master's degree in education. That ain't enough.

And on top of that, besides incomes going down, all the costs to maintain a middle-class life, health care, energy costs, education, and retirement security, are all under attack. And what do my colleagues do when it comes to retirement security, when corporation after corporation is eliminating pensions? They want Social Security to lead the way.

The plan for retirement security isn't, when companies are eliminating pensions, to have Social Security eliminated or privatized. It is to give them that security that people know, that people like, and that is the security that comes with Social Security.

On energy. What is their answer to rising costs? As my colleague from Oregon said before, they handed over \$14.5 billion in taxpayer subsidies to big oil companies so they could make additional profit. My view is if gas is 75 bucks a barrel, or 74 bucks a barrel, let the free market work. Use your profits to drill. Don't take taxpayers to subsidize it. People out there are paying twice, once at the pump at 3 bucks a gallon and once on April 15 when we hand over \$15 billion a year.

And for health care costs? They handed off to the pharmaceutical companies an additional \$130 billion in profits.

Middle-class families are struggling with ever-increasing taxes, ever-increasing costs and stagnant incomes. It

is time to have an economic strategy that, again, lifts all boats.

Now, I don't want to take a stroll down memory lane; but in the 1990s, when we were running balanced budgets and we were running a surplus, incomes for all people, not just the top end, but for all workers were up. College costs were contained, health care inflation was running alongside regular inflation, and energy prices were actually \$1.33 a gallon, not 3 bucks a gallon.

That was a time in which we actually made an improvement. We invested by giving all kids health care whose parents didn't have health care. We created 22 million jobs. We ended welfare as we know it. We put people to work rather than dependency. We had record homeownership, low inflation, a balanced budget, record surpluses, and began to pay down the debt.

Put your fiscal house in order. Invest in education, health care, and energy independence in America. It is time for a change. It is time for new priorities.

VENEZUELA AND TERRORISM

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Subcommittee on International Terrorism that I chair held a hearing on Venezuela's link to terrorism. On May 15, the State Department designated Venezuela as not cooperating fully with U.S. anti-terrorism efforts. Mr. Speaker, from what we heard from the Department officials, it is not that Venezuela is not cooperating fully; it is that Venezuela is not cooperating at all.

Disconcerting was the testimony we heard from the State Department that Venezuelan passports can be forged with child-like ease, and that the U.S. is detaining at our borders an increasing number of third-country aliens carrying false Venezuelan documents. According to a 2003 U.S. News report, thousands of Venezuelan identity documents are being distributed to foreigners from Middle Eastern nations, including Syria, Pakistan, Egypt and Lebanon.

We know that travel documents are as important as weapons for terrorists. Mr. Speaker, post-9/11, it is reckless not to view our immigration policy as national security policy.

AMBASSADOR NOMINEE ROBERT HOAGLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my concerns with the nomination of Robert Hoagland as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. Many questions remain regarding U.S. policy on the Armenian genocide, and they remain unanswered. Key Senate Foreign Relations Committee

members continue to have serious misgivings about the nomination.

Two weeks ago, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee considered Mr. Hoagland's nomination. During the hearing, Mr. Hoagland failed to adequately respond to the questions asked by the Senators, including not clarifying the U.S.'s policy in the denial of the Armenian genocide. In many instances, he did not respond to specific Senate inquiries. He diverted his answers by responding with what seemed like prepared talking points, and went to great lengths to avoid using the term genocide.

Additionally, in response to a written inquiry from Senator JOHN KERRY concerning Turkey's criminal prosecution of journalists for writing about the Armenian genocide, Mr. Hoagland referred to these writings as allegations.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. has historically taken a leadership role in preventing genocide and human rights violations, but the Bush administration continues to play word games by not calling evil by its proper name. Instead, they refer to the mass killings of 1.5 million Armenians as tragic events. This term cannot be substituted for genocide. The two words are simply not synonymous.

Mr. Speaker, there are historical documents that cannot be refuted, yet somehow the administration continues to ignore the truth in fear of offending another government.

The Bush administration has not offered a meaningful explanation of its reasons for firing the current U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans. In fact, the State Department's assertion that it did not receive any communications from the Turkish Government concerning Ambassador Evans' February 2005 affirmation of the Armenian genocide is simply not credible.

Official Department of Justice filings by the Turkish Government's registered foreign agent, the Livingston Group, document that there are at least four different occasions of communications with State Department officials following Ambassador Evans' remarks affirming the Armenian genocide. Still, the State Department refutes these claims.

Mr. Speaker, this lack of honesty has been an all too common practice of the Bush administration. The American people and this Congress deserve a full and truthful account of the role of the Turkish Government in denying the Armenian genocide. Our Nation's response to genocide should not be denigrated to a level acceptable to the Turkish Government. It is about time the Bush administration started dictating a policy for Americans and not for a foreign government.

Mr. Speaker, I fear that sending an ambassador to Yerevan who denies the Armenian genocide would represent a tragic escalation in the Bush administration's ignorance and support in Turkey's campaign of genocide denial. The State Department has reported to Sen-

ate offices that they expect Ambassador Designate Hoagland to be confirmed during a business meeting early next week. I would urge the Senate to block his nomination until this administration recognizes the Armenian genocide.

□ 1845

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUSTANY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DROUGHT RELIEF

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. OSBORNE. During the month of August, most Members of Congress will be in their districts, and the thing that those of us in the middle part of the country will see is what is reflected on this map which deals with the drought. We see some brown areas, some red areas. And what this represents is not just 1 year of drought, but rather, we are in the eighth year of a drought that has exceeded, in many cases, the drought of the 1930s, the Dust Bowl years.

Now, you don't see clouds of dust blowing around. You don't see dust 3 or 4 inches high on window sills because of conservation practices. We no longer plow up our fields like we once did. But the drought, in most cases in this area, is actually more extreme over a longer period of time than what we saw in the most extreme drought of the last century.

There are parts of Nebraska where we are now 40 inches short of moisture, and in many of these areas the total rain fall in an average year is only 15 inches, so over that period of 7 or 8 years, 40 inches of shortage is a tremendous hit to take.

To make matters even worse, we have had extremely high temperatures. Normally, in the Dakotas and Nebraska you might see one or two days in the 100-degree range, 102, 103. But this summer we have had numerous days between 110, 115 degrees of temperature. And of course, these are records. So the heat and the drought compounded has led to a disastrous situation.

Dry land crops are either totally wiped out at this point or barely hanging on. And probably the most immediate, most pressing problem deals with our pastures, because if you have livestock and you have no grass pasture, there is nothing you can do but sell off your livestock, and so that has been happening rather rapidly.

Reservoirs in this area are down by 50 to 75 percent. And so the irrigation water in these reservoirs is pretty much nonexistent.

One other thing that many times people will mention, they say, well, you have got crop insurance, so why won't that take care of you? Well, the problem is this, that each year that you have a drought and you have less production means that the next year you can purchase less crop insurance because of the loss that you had the year before. So after 7 or 8 successive years, the amount of crop insurance that you can purchase has been reduced by 50, 60 percent, so you don't even really get the amount of money back that your inputs, your seed and your fertilizer cost you in the first place. So, as a result, obviously we have a very difficult situation.

In 2002, we had a very similar, very disastrous drought, and we did get some drought relief. And the thing that happened at that point was those who showed loss, who absolutely needed the help, got some. And then in 2003, we found people, lawmakers from other States said, well, so and so is getting some help, so we need to get some help too. And pretty soon we were expanding drought relief to areas that had no drought, who had no crop loss. And as a result, the series of articles we have seen in The Washington Post are accurate. And it was certainly our fault, those of us in Congress, for letting this get out of hand.

And of course, this is going to make it even more difficult at this point to do anything about the current drought. But we are hoping that people will understand that it is possible to administer a drought relief program responsibly, to get the money to people who really are hurting, because we are probably going to lose some farmers and ranchers this year in great numbers. And we hope that we do get some help.

And sometimes people say, well, you have got to have an offset. And so we are starting to look for offsets. We are trying to look for someplace where we can get this drought relief money from. But the way the Federal budget is at the present time, it is very, very difficult to find an offset.

So we have seen disaster relief go to many areas of the country. We just want to make people aware of what is going on. And we hope that, as people come back from the August break, they will bear this in mind and possibly have some disaster relief.

MEDICARE PART D DOUGHNUT HOLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, nearly 3 years, ago I voted against Medicare part D, and after the leadership held the vote open for 3 hours, it did pass.